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THE BALKANS, ITALY AND THE ADRIATIC

BY

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Serbo-Croat Orthography

š = *sh* in English "ship."

č = *ch* in „ "church.

ć = (the same, softer).

c = *ts* in English "cats."

j = *y* in „ "your."

ž = *j* in French "jour."

PREFACE

THE aim of this little volume, which was published early in August 1915, was to emphasize the vital importance of Serbia and the Southern Slav Question in the present war, both to the Entente as a whole and to Britain in particular. The conquest of Serbia by the Central Powers alters nothing in the Southern Slav programme, even though it renders its realisation more remote. The ideal still upheld by the overwhelming majority of Southern Slavs remains unchanged, and was publicly defined by the Serbian Prince Regent on his visit to London as, "The union in one single fatherland of all the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, who are one people with the same traditions, the same tongue, and the same tendencies, but whom an evil fate has divided." Either Serbia must achieve the unity of the race, or she, and Montenegro with her, must share the fate of Bosnia and be swallowed up in a victorious Austria. Any other solution would mean a continuance of the intolerable state of misrule and consequent unrest, which for the past decade has kept the eastern Adriatic shores and their hinterland in a ferment, and contributed so materially to the outbreak of the Great War. Only a radical solution of the Southern Slav Question can assure permanent peace to the Balkan Peninsula. Without Southern Slav unity there can be no serious barrier to those designs of Pan-German hegemony from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf, which prompted William II and his advisers in unchaining a world war.

June 1916. R. W. S.-W.

THE BALKANS, ITALY AND THE ADRIATIC

I

WITH all Europe, and our own country not least of all, on the brink of changes far more revolutionary than anything in the past, it is still quite unnecessary to apologize for dwelling upon the Balkan problem; for not merely does it concern us most intimately but it supplies one of the keys to the whole military situation. But at the very outset it is necessary to emphasize the need for treating the problem as a whole and aiming at a general solution on broad and comprehensive lines. Hitherto it has been too often treated piecemeal, mainly owing to the selfish interest and short-sighted outlook of a number of states all meddling and pulling different ways. This has brought its own revenge; and indeed it is no exaggeration to ascribe the Balkan deadlock of the past year to the unhappy tendency to take up one small section of the problem after another, so to speak, without its context. The Balkan problem can never be solved on a Serbian or Bulgarian or Greek basis, but only upon a basis of general Balkan policy.

In any consideration of Balkan history during the last two centuries, three central facts at once emerge, facts so obvious as almost to be commonplaces. The first is the domination of the Turks, the long and seemingly hopeless struggle of the subject Christian races against an alien rule of the most savage and incompetent kind. The second is the perpetual interference of the Great Powers in Balkan affairs, in their own purely selfish interests, and the consequent formation of a thick network of intrigue and counter-intrigue, with one main thread running through it all—the rivalry of Austria and Russia. The third is the rise of national feeling steadily leavening the dead mass, until in 1912–13 the final stage of liberation was reached, only to be succeeded by partial disillusionment and a transference of the struggle to other fields. I am not at present concerned with the details of this historic evolution; but a comparison of the position of the Balkan peoples in 1600, 1700, 1800, and to-day, is both instructive in itself and calculated to counteract excessive pessimism. When the seventeenth century opened, the Turks held in a vice not only the entire Balkan Peninsula, but also Roumania, Southern Russia (with the Crimea), Bukovina, Central Hungary (with Budapest), Bosnia, and parts of Croatia and Transylvania acknowledged their suzerainty. In 1718 —the date at which the Balkan seventeenth century may be said to end—Hungary and Transylvania had been reclaimed, and even part of Serbia with the fortress of Belgrade itself had been wrested from the Sultan.

The discords of warring Europe postponed the drastic changes which towards the close of the century seemed on the point of overwhelming the Turkish dominions; but though in 1800 Turkey was territorially hardly in a worse position than 100 years previously (having lost Bukovina and Crimea, but regained Northern Serbia), the whole fabric was already rotten to its core, and quite incapable of resisting the repeated storms which were to assail it in the succeeding century. Since 1800 all has been different, and more drastic changes have taken place—almost all for the better—than in the preceding fifteen centuries.

The first turn of the Turkish tide was above all due to the efforts of the House of Habsburg, which, though it has many errors, even crimes, upon its conscience, especially the crime of religious intolerance and persecution, possesses one crowning merit which can never be denied to it. It set itself to be the champion of Christendom against the Turk, and to that mission, despite many shortcomings, it remained true for two centuries. Nor did it merely roll back the tide of Turkish conquest by force of arms—aided at a critical moment, it should be remembered, by a famous Slavonic hero, John Sobieski, King of Poland. It also welcomed Christian refugees from the Balkans to its dominions. The most notable instance of this occurred in 1690, when the Serb Patriarch with many thousand Serbian families fled from the ancient See of Ipek and settled in Slavonia and Southern Hungary, under the guarantee of special charters from the Emperor Leopold I. Nor can any

fair critic of Austria-Hungary omit to mention that the revival of Serbian literary and ecclesiastical life took place within the Habsburg dominions—at Novi Sad (Neusatz) and at Karlovci (Karlowitz) at a time when Serbia itself was dead and when the only other centre of Southern Slav culture was the tiny republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa).

It was not for nothing that the Habsburg emblem has been a double-headed eagle, facing both ways—westwards to Germany and Italy, eastwards to the Balkans. In the latter direction Austria had a start of several generations over any of her rivals, but she failed to use it. The eagle's western head monopolized attention, and by the time that Austria had emerged from the struggle with Frederick the Great a rival for the post of Balkan champion had appeared in the shape of the great northern Colossus. Russia had two notable points in her favour, her racial kinship with the Balkan Slavs, and her ecclesiastical position as the stronghold of Orthodoxy and of the Byzantine Church tradition. Even Peter the Great had ill-defined and occasional relations with Montenegro, and his immediate successors induced many of the Serbs who had settled in southern Hungary to transfer themselves to the plains of the Dnieper. By the reign of Catherine the Great, Austria's monopoly was gone for ever. Henceforth it was a question of parallel spheres of influence, of Austria on the west, of Russia on the east of the peninsula. At intervals the idea of partition was invoked, the most famous instances being the joint scheme of

Catherine the Great and Joseph II, and that of the Prussian statesman Hertzberg—both alike suggested by the crowning infamy of the Polish partition.[1]

All these unnatural and kaleidoscopic plans of course rested on a purely dynastic basis; peoples, races, and provinces were bargained to and fro like so many pawns in a game. At length the stately castle on the sand, erected at the pleasure of a few monarchs and diplomats, began to crumble before the incoming tide of a great idea. This was the principle of Nationality, roused into being by the volcanic outburst of the French Revolution and the subversive policy of the First Napoleon. As the eighteenth century closed, the dry bones were stirring everywhere, in Hungary, Bohemia, and Croatia, but also among the Serbs, Greeks, and Roumanians of the Balkan peninsula. By his creation of an Illyrian state, comprising most of the Southern Slav provinces along the eastern Adriatic coast and having its capital at Ljubljana (Laibach), Napoleon earned the right to be regarded as one of the great awakeners of Balkan nationalism.

Just as the odes of Alfieri and Manzoni in his honour play their part in the revival of Italian national consciousness, so the poems of the Slovene priest Vodnik in honour of Illyria and its creator play a similar part in the movement for Serbo-Croat unity, which was so soon to inspire the loftier muse

[1] These projects may be studied in that brilliant little historical monograph of Albert Sorel, *La question d'Orient au XVIII^e siècle*, and in Djuvara's *Cent projets de Partition*.

of Peter Petrović Njegoš, the poet-prince and bishop of Montenegro.

The first spontaneous national movement against the Turks was the Serbian rising of 1804 and the following years. It cannot be too often repeated that Serbia, unlike her Balkan neighbours, achieved her own freedom. What she has, she won almost unaided. Kara George, her first national leader, received occasional help or encouragement from Austria and from Russia, but the decisive factor was the strong arms of the Serbian peasants. In Serbia there is little or no parade or display. The Serbian state is a homely building, the façade of which still has to be constructed; but it is built upon that most solid of all foundations, a democratic peasant people owning its own land and irrevocably rooted in the soil. There is no aristocracy, for the Turks took care to exterminate it. There is only a very limited middle class, which even to-day is scarcely able to provide a really efficient administration in all its necessary branches; and this fact explains the very obvious deficiencies of its diplomatic service.

For the first century of the new era the chief bane of Serbia has been the deplorable feud of two rival native dynasties, whose annals are stained by three hideous crimes all too suggestive of fifteenth-century Scottish history—the murder of Kara George in 1817, the murder of Michael Obrenović, Serbia's wisest prince, in 1868, and the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga in 1903. The political and personal scandals which crowded the reigns of

the two Obrenović kings had made Serbia a by-word in the Yellow Press of Europe, and the innate strength of the Serbian peasantry had become obscured by the antics of a tiny group of degenerates. It is perhaps fortunate that Serbia should have been scorned and despised by all the world at a moment when a far-sighted enemy might have found means to crush her irretrievably.

The national movement among the Greeks followed close upon the heels of the Serbian revival. This is not the place to recount its history, but merely to indicate a few of its more salient features. The Greeks, too, had lost the greater part of their aristocracy under Turkish rule; but being a seafaring, not an inland or mainly agricultural people, they replaced it to some extent by a wealthy commercial class, which developed the natural gifts of a race of traders. The island of Chios was a notable centre of Greek culture till the hideous massacre of 1822, which gave such an impetus to the movement of Greek liberation.

Strangely enough this movement really began not in what is now Greece, but in the Danubian principalities. This was due to the existence of wealthy Greek colonies in the towns of Wallachia and the Black Sea, and to the effects of the so-called Phanariot *régime*, under which wealthy Greek families in the Lighthouse or Phanar quarter of Constantinople had competed with hard cash and political intrigue for the vassal thrones of Wallachia and Moldavia. A secret society known as the Hetairia was organized

by Alexander Ypsilanti, a man of talent, though full of erratic fantasy. His ulterior aim, the reconstruction of the Byzantine Empire with Constantinople as its capital, failed lamentably, like all schemes which are merely based on historic memories, not on modern realities. Of these, the two together are invincible, the one without the other is mere moonshine.

What distinguished the Greek from the Serbian cause was the foreign aid so freely lavished upon the former. Russia fomented and encouraged the Greek rising, under the influence of the Orthodox Church. Moscow, the spiritual successor of Byzantium as "the Third Rome," was to restore the severed links which once had bound the two places; and those who could not believe that a Russian Tsar would hear mass daily at Santa Sofia, at least dreamt of a restored Byzantium as the seat of a Russian Grand Duke, of a Romanov "Secundogenitur," and used the visionary Ypsilanti as a useful tool to prepare the way. But quite apart from Russia, the Greek cause received a powerful if incalculable support from the Philhellene sentiments of Western Europe, voiced above all in the poetry and personal sacrifice of Byron. The result was that when the war of independence had reached a critical stage, the scale was turned by a political coalition between Russia and the Western Powers. Their joint victory at Navarino deprived Turkey of her control of the sea and thus set the seal upon Greek freedom.

The Roumanians were not far behind the Greeks,

Indeed, it may be said of the Danubian principalities that where the Greek Hetairia sowed, Roumanian nationalism reaped. The outstanding fact in the history of Wallachia and Moldavia is that they had retained their landed aristocracy, and consequently a much more complex state of society than that which prevailed among their neighbours. They had never fallen utterly under the heel of the Turk, and it is characteristic that while south of the Danube the Christian rayah risked instant death if he failed to dismount on meeting a Turk, in the towns of Wallachia the erection of a mosque was never tolerated. None the less, as vassal states subject to tribute and military control, the two principalities fell into a hideous state of corruption and stagnation; and even to-day, despite all progress, certain obvious flaws in Roumanian political life are due to the survival of influences from that shameful period.

The French influence materially contributed towards reviving among the Roumanians a long dormant national feeling and the consciousness of their Latin origin. Their exposed geographical position, which in earlier centuries was responsible for the infusion of so much Slavonic blood, made them a hundred years ago a pawn in the triangular game of Turco-Austro-Russian rivalry. In the course of sixty years the Russians occupied the principalities no less than four times, and the Austrians once.

In a word, Serbian Liberation was achieved *without* the Great Powers, Greek Independence *through* the Great Powers, and Roumanian Unity in their

despite. They made every effort to prevent the union of the two principalities and the election of a single prince. The one noteworthy exception was Napoleon III, who, whatever may be thought of his internal *régime* in France, remained consistently true to the principle of Nationality and a loyal friend of France's Latin kinsmen on the Black Sea. If Greece owes much to Britain and Bulgaria to Russia, Roumania's debt, both political and spiritual, to France, cannot be over-estimated. Let us hope that this sorry attempt to prevent the union of two countries, whom nature had intended for a common fate, will not be repeated at the expense of Serbia and Croatia; for the result will inevitably be a similar *fiasco* for the guilty parties among the Great Powers.

By a curious irony of fate it was Napoleon III's influence which secured the Roumanian throne for a Hohenzollern prince against the will of the Habsburgs, and without any real encouragement from the King of Prussia or his famous minister, Bismarck, who told Prince Charles half jestingly on the eve of departure that the new adventure, even if it should fail, would at least be an agreeable souvenir for his old age. At this point it may be well to emphasize the part played in the Balkans by the personal influence of the various imported dynasties and their marriage alliances. To-day Greece is ruled by a Danish king, the nephew of Edward VII, and a German queen, the sister of William II; Roumania by a German king, and a queen who is half British and half Russian; and Bulgaria by a German king

who began life as an Austrian officer, and is still a Hungarian magnate in virtue of the vast estates which he inherited from his Kohâry grandmother.

II

THE liberation of the fourth of the five Balkan peoples took place later and under very different circumstances. Bulgaria is the only Balkan state which had virtually no share in its own emancipation. Her people, after centuries of grinding tyranny, remained passive while Russia and Roumania fought the Turks and while Serbia and Montenegro staked everything for the sake of their kinsmen in Bosnia. Then Russia propounded an ill-digested and ambitious project, which lives in history as the Treaty of San Stefano; and the Great Powers promptly wrecked it and at the Congress of Berlin imposed a settlement which was infinitely more unsatisfactory and unjust. The purely Serbo-Croat province of Bosnia-Herzegovina was snatched from under the very nose of the two Serb states and given to Austro-Hungary. Roumelia was artificially held apart from kindred Bulgaria. Macedonia was handed back to Turkish misrule, with the dire results which even the unthinking man in the street is at last beginning to comprehend.

The central fact in the history of the next thirty years—so far as the Balkan Peninsula is concerned, has been Europe's persistent refusal to study or

understand Balkan psychology. The Bulgarian peasant is slow, but sure. His qualities, both good and bad, differ radically from those of his neighbours to the west and north. He lacks the diplomatic talent of the Roumanian, the pliancy and business alertness of the Greek, the sentiment, the soft heart, the gay and mercurial temperament of the Serb. He is plodding, dour, suspicious, sticking to his pound of flesh, to the letter of the law, often in utter oblivion of its spirit. He has little or no imagination and occasionally plunges from secretive reserve to appalling candour and acute megalomania. But he is a man of his word, infinitely patient and hardworking, and resolute to fulfil whatever he has set himself to do.

Such an estimate may sound like a prophecy after the event. Thirty years ago he was an unknown quantity to Europe and above all to her diplomatists. But with such qualities it was inevitable that he should wrest Roumelia from the Turks, that he should fall out with the domineering Russian generals who had set themselves to "run" the little brother; that he should disappoint the calculations of the shallow and corrupt King Milan of Serbia, who, as the tool of Vienna, endeavoured to play dog in the manger to his Bulgarian neighbours; and finally that he should set himself doggedly to work for the realisation of that racial unity which foreign intrigue had snatched from his grasp at the very moment of fulfilment.

Those historians who deny the influence of person-

ality on history, had better give the Balkans a wide berth. It is only necessary to consider the development of the various Balkan States in the last two generations under their respective rulers. It would be difficult to exaggerate what Roumania owes to the sane judgment, patience, high personal character, military qualities and diplomatic experience of the late King Charles. It is only necessary to contrast the fate of Serbia under her wisest ruler, Prince Michael, in the sixties, and then under his two intolerable successors King Milan and King Alexander, and then once more under the democratic and self-effacing rule of King Peter. In Greece it is notorious how the personality of a single statesman, Mr. Venizelos, has regenerated a whole country. Nor must we overlook the singular influence exercised by King Ferdinand upon the fortunes of his country. A man of consummate skill, a born diplomat and student of psychology, overcoming his twin failings of vanity and cowardice by the charm of the Coburgs, reinforced by some of the *savoir faire* of his Bourbon mother, King Ferdinand has never allowed scruples to stand in the way of his ambition, and has gradually built up in that democratic little country a special political system of his own. While King Charles spared no effort to strengthen and maintain party government in the British sense (indeed Roumania is the only Continental country where it can be said to exist, though doubtless rather in the sense of Pitt and Fox than in the sense of Asquith and Bonar Law), King Ferdinand as consistently laboured to

make it impossible and to foster a group system in which half a dozen political leaders with varying programmes fluttered round the lamp of power. The numbers of each Government party were artificially swollen by office and sank to vanishing-point in opposition. Individuals were encouraged in their dependence upon the King, who kept them so far as possible at his beck and call, to make or mar. At last three years ago Parliament in a fit of dizzy madness virtually abdicated in his favour the entire control of foreign policy, and the nation swallowed its servitude almost without a murmur.

The true clue to King Ferdinand—and he deserves close study—is the fact that he is not only Tsar of the Bulgarians, but also a Magyar nobleman, owning wide estates in Hungary, spending half the year upon them and seldom happier than in intercourse with the magnates of that land of political reaction. The proper angle from which to study him is supplied by Budapest and Vienna. One thing he learnt to perfection from Hungary, and taught to his pupils in Bulgaria—the talent of self-advertisement. For twenty years the governing clique imposed upon Europe Ferdinand's imaginary estimate of their talents, until at length the events of 1913 for the first time opened the world's eyes to the contrast between their truculence and tactlessness and the sterling qualities of the Bulgarian peasant. Ferdinand and his entourage dreamt of Bulgaria as the Prussia of the Balkans, and of himself crowned as Byzantine Emperor in Hagia Sofia. That dream

will never be realized, and it is not desirable that it should be.

During the period which followed the Berlin settlement of 1878 Austro-Russian rivalry grew steadily more acute, and was reinforced by the jealousies and intrigues of four other Great Powers, which continued to shut their eyes to hard facts, to vacillate between meddlesomeness and muddle, to treat the little states of the Peninsula as naughty children and to play them off unscrupulously against each other. The bankruptcy of this comedy between the so-called "Concert" of Europe and the Sublime Porte was already foreshadowed by the Balkan War, and in the great conflagration of to-day is publicly proclaimed. For meanwhile the naughty little children grew to man's estate and suddenly decided to regulate their own affairs in harmony. The Balkan League sprang into being, and acted suddenly and vigorously. The Great Powers were left talking in helpless and ridiculous postures.

III

THE Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 are the greatest landmark in modern Balkan history, and indeed a decisive landmark in the fortunes of Europe as a whole. They set the seal upon a process to which Europe, perhaps providentially, had been blind—the Renaissance of Serbia.

In the eighties and nineties of last century the situation of Serbia had gone from bad to worse,

The reigns of the two Obrenović kings were one long and uninterrupted succession of scandals. Mingled with the love affairs, quarrels, and divorce of Milan, with the fatal marriage of Alexander with a former mistress, was the more serious background of political corruption, repeated *coups d'état*, palace upheavals and infringements of the Constitution. Milan, able though he was, was utterly lacking in moral stamina and had sunk to the level of a mere Austrian agent. His wretched son and his more wretched wife at last made themselves utterly impossible, alike at home and abroad. The credit of Serbia was at zero. Torn by factions which the royal couple encouraged and inflamed, her energies wasted on the fatal dynastic feud and the internal plots which it generated, Serbia seemed on the edge of an abyss. Her *Roy Fainéant* and his palace clique hid from the eyes of the world her splendid peasantry, her true hope for a glorious future. A surgical operation could alone save the distracted patient. The crisis was reached in the hideous crime of June 10, 1903, when a gang of officers murdered Alexander and Draga in a mood of truly Oriental savagery, and the nation scarcely attempted to conceal its jubilant relief. The situation has been neatly summed up in the words of Professor Denis, the distinguished French historian: "History, whose duty it is to brand the assassins, none the less reserves its supreme condemnation for the princes who had reduced their country to such a degree of moral indigence that it could see safety nowhere save in crime."

Since 1903 there has been a remarkable transformation in Serbia, under the rule of Peter Karagjorgjević, the first constitutional sovereign whom the country has ever had. The revival has been at once economic, literary, intellectual, political, and above all military. The whole atmosphere has changed. But public opinion in Western Europe continued to be fed on news from Vienna and Budapest, in all that concerns Serbia. All of us were unconsciously under the spell. Speaking for myself, I have to confess that it took me five years' acquaintance with Austria to break through the enchantment, and even then two years more to shake off the potent effects. An elaborate system of calumny and false news was established by the Magyar and Jewish journalists who made their headquarters at the little Slavonian frontier town of Semlin (Zemun) and battened on the sensational titbits served out to them by their spies and agents in the Serbian capital, just across the river. Their information supplied the press of Vienna and Budapest with all it knew of Serbia, and was the more readily accepted by the great journals of the West, because, almost without exception, they had shirked the expense of keeping correspondents of their own in Belgrade. "The tradition of Semlin," as it may fairly be called, has spread unseen like some poisonous miasma, and for many years affected the whole outlook of the outside world not merely towards Serbia, but towards the whole Southern Slav problem and the position of the Serbo-Croats of the Habsburg Monarchy. The struggle against this outlook has indeed been an

uphill fight. Nor was prejudice the only weapon in the armoury of the foe. The tradition of Semlin was officially supported from Vienna and Budapest by a deliberate policy of forgery and espionage on a grand scale. The grave scandals of the Agram High Treason Trial (March-September 1909), in which a drunken Judge Jeffreys based a more than shadowy case upon the delations of a raw and youthful police spy of notorious antecedents, were followed by the even graver scandals of the Friedjung Trial (December 1909) in Vienna resulting out of a libel action brought by the Serbo-Croat Coalition leaders[1] against Dr. Friedjung, the well-known Austrian historian. The documents on the basis of which he had publicly accused them of being paid agents of the Serbian Government, had been supplied to him by the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office, and the trial revealed them as impudent forgeries, concocted in the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Belgrade! The moral responsibility was subsequently brought home to Count Forgács, the Minister in Belgrade, and indirectly of course to Count Aehrenthal himself as Foreign Minister. But Forgács, though publicly denounced in the Austrian Delegation as "Count Azev"[2] and though

[1] In 1905 several of the leading Croat and Serb parties in Croatia formed a political coalition, on the lines of the coalition of Magyar opposition parties in Hungary, and this coalition has since withstood every effort of Budapest and Vienna to restore the former discord. At the time of the trial the coalition consisted of 53 deputies out of a total of 88 in the Croatian Parliament.

[2] A reference to the notorious Russian agent who was at one and the same time a revolutionary and a police spy, and who

unable to refute the damning accusations levelled at his head by prominent Austrian Parliamentarians, was not allowed to fall into disgrace. On the contrary, within two years of his exposure he had become permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and the inspirer of new plots to discredit and ruin Serbia. It is superfluous to add that his sinister influence supplies one of the clues to the fatal ultimatum of July 1914.

The revelations of these two memorable trials had already seriously shaken the Semlin Tradition. Its deathblow was dealt by the Balkan War, and above all by the Serbian victory at Kumanovo. Without for one moment belittling Bulgaria's achievement at Lule Burgas, we shall not err in describing Kumanovo as the herald of a new era, an event as momentous as the fatal battle of Kosovo,[1] which it signally avenged.

IV

THE issue of the Balkan War upset the calculations of Vienna, Budapest, and Berlin; the extent of their misconception may be studied in Marshal von der Goltz's illuminating little essay on the Turkish defeat. Austria-Hungary and Germany had been

betrayed the secrets of each side to the other, until a just fate came upon him. His name stands as a characteristic *agent provocateur*.

[1] The Flodden of the Balkans (1389), in which the Serbian Tsar, and with him the Serbian Empire, perished.

rather pleased than otherwise at the outbreak of war; for they had expected that the Balkan allies would be easily defeated by the Turks, that Russia would hesitate to intervene, or that her intervention would give the two Central Powers an admirable excuse for attacking and crushing her in what could be made to appear as a defensive war, in which the Western Powers would remain neutral. Instead of this, the Central Powers were faced, in the brief space of a month, by the accomplished fact of Turkey's collapse. They therefore strained every nerve to destroy the Balkan League, and only too well did they succeed.

As early as November 1913 Austria-Hungary had planned an attack upon Serbia. The press agitation which introduced and maintained the notorious "Prochaska Affair" was intended to prepare the ground. To those whose studies have lain in Vienna it has long been notorious that Austria-Hungary contemplated aggressive action against Serbia; but two anecdotes may serve to drive home the fact. In the winter of 1912 Mr. Steed, at that time *Times* correspondent in Vienna, received a visit from a high Austrian officer, who came from Baron Conrad von Hoetzendorff, Chief of the General Staff, to discuss the policy of a joint attack upon Serbia and Russia, as the surest means of settling the thorny Southern Slav question. When Mr. Steed hinted at the doubtful attitude of Austria's own Slavonic population in such an event, and the risks involved in such a policy, his visitor answered that such risks were

worth taking, and that at the worst they would "perish gloriously" (*glorreich untergehen*).[1]

At the period of this interview it was rumoured, and indeed firmly believed, in Vienna that Mr. Prochaska, the Austro-Hungarian Consul at Prizren, had been grossly insulted, and even mutilated, by the Serbs on their occupation of the town. For a fortnight the Ballplatz claimed to be without news of their representative, but nothing was done to discourage the growth of the legend and the consequent excitement of public opinion. When at last the bubble was pricked and Serbian innocence well established, Mr. Prochaska returned to Vienna, and was soon afterwards transferred to a new post in Brazil. Before leaving Europe he assured a colleague in the Consular Service that he had absolutely no ground for complaint against the Serbian authorities, but that he had received official instructions from headquarters to work up an "incident" at Prizren. His colleague repeated his words to a distinguished writer whose name is well known beyond the bounds of the Habsburg Monarchy, and it was from him that I learnt the fact.

At the last moment Austria-Hungary abandoned its designs of aggression. The obvious perils of such a course, the restraining influence of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the enthusiasm aroused in Russia by the Balkan victories, the tremendous Serbophil outbursts in Dalmatia, Bosnia, and Croatia, and the scandals which coincided with Auffenberg's

[1] See *L'Angleterre et la Guerre*, by H. W. Steed, 1915.

departure from the Ministry of War, all acted as deterrents. For open war was substituted the more insidious policy of checking Serbian expansion and sowing discord between the allies. In making joint war upon the Turks, Serbia had had a double aim, the liberation of her kinsmen in "Old Serbia" and the acquisition of an outlet to the Adriatic. This access had to be denied to her at all costs. Only in Northern Albania could this access be secured, since Serbia's natural outlet through Bosnia and Dalmatia, the long line of coast inhabited by people of her own race, was already in the hands of Austria-Hungary. For this reason, and not from any foolish desire to dominate the wild Albanian tribes, Serbian troops were dispatched to Durazzo and Medua. But Austria-Hungary peremptorily demanded the evacuation of these sorry ports, insisted on the creation of an artificial Albanian state, and played upon the very natural sympathy of Europe for so brave and primitive a race. The overtures of M. Pašić, the Serbian Premier, to Vienna—overtures which held out very far-reaching economic concessions—were contemptuously rejected by Count Berchtold and his inspirers. Thus Serbia's situation became extremely serious. She could not afford to risk the establishment of two customs frontiers between herself and the Ægean. Driven from the Adriatic, she had no alternative save to seek her economic outlet down the valley of the Vardar towards the Ægean, and in so doing she came into violent conflict, as was intended, with Bulgarian aspirations in Macedonia.

Into this lamentable quarrel it is not my intention to enter in any detail. There have been grave faults on both sides, and the truth, always so difficult to elucidate on the volcanic soil of Balkan politics, is by no means as obvious as some sentimentalists would have us believe. Macedonia contains an amorphous population, which is predominantly Slavonic, but which most certainly has a very large admixture of non-Slavonic elements, especially the now dwindling Vlachs. More than one prominent Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian statesman and diplomat is of Vlach parentage, and the fact is clearly written in their faces and temperament. After centuries of grinding tyranny and misrule, it is utterly impossible to say where the Serb population ends and the Bulgarian begins. In language, tradition, costume, the two races imperceptibly fade into each other along an absolutely invisible frontier. For decades Macedonia had been the unhappy victim of three or four rival propaganda, of which the Bulgarian was for various reasons by far the best organized and the most successful. The chief medium was the Church, and it cannot be too strongly emphasized that in the Balkan Peninsula the Churches, whether Greek, Serb, or Bulgarian, are mere political machines, without a particle of religion in the Western sense, or in the Eastern Russian sense. With certain notable exceptions, their bishops are arch-intriguers, who know more of Camorra methods than of the Sermon on the Mount.

In a word, the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance was made

in Sofia, Belgrade, and Athens, the Serbo-Bulgarian quarrel was made in Budapest, Vienna, and Berlin. Bulgarian megalomania was deliberately fanned by Viennese and Magyar intrigue. Dr. Danev was encouraged to put forward claims in London behind the back of his Serbian colleagues. Finally, in the critical month of June 1913 the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, delivered a speech in the Parliament of Budapest, full of thinly-veiled incitements to Bulgaria to take by force what was unlawfully denied to her.

On the fatal night of June 29 the Bulgarian army attacked its former allies, and Balkan unity was at an end.

But Vienna and Budapest had once more miscalculated. Once more they were placed before a sudden *fait accompli*. Serbia emerged victorious and aggrandized, with Greece bound to her in close and cordial alliance; while Roumania, as the result of Austro-Magyar double-dealing, detached herself from the Triple Alliance after thirty years of docile self-suppression.

To the late Italian Premier, Signor Giolitti, we owe the damning revelation, confirming the worst suspicions of close observers on the spot, that in August 1913 Austria-Hungary proposed to attack Serbia and so wipe out the defeat on the Bregalnica, in which the unhappy Bulgarians had been the tools and Austria-Hungary the real loser. Italy's attitude, based on the clause of Balkan reciprocity in her agreement with Austria-Hungary, the firmness displayed by the Cabinet of Bucarest, and probably also

the advice of Germany, who was not quite ready until the Kiel week of the following year, staved off the danger of Austrian intervention, and even the diplomatic world remained for the most part in ignorance of what it had so narrowly escaped. In September 1913 peace seemed assured, though the reality was very different.

The Treaty of Bucarest (August 1913) ushered in a new stage in the perennial Balkan struggle. Emancipation towards the south had been attained, with certain obvious qualifications. A new problem of unity towards the north assumed the central place in the situation. The prophetic phrase of M. Albert Sorel was realized, "On the day when the Eastern Question appears to have been solved, Europe will be confronted by the Austrian Question." Since 1913 the vital question has been the emancipation of the nationalities of Hungary—the Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, Roumanians, Ruthenes, Germans—from Magyar yoke, or, stated in other words (for some sections of the problem were far riper and more developed than others), the twin problems of Southern Slav and Roumanian Unity—on the one hand of the seven million Croats, Serbs and Slovenes of Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Istria, and Carniola; on the other hand of the three and a half million Roumanians of Transylvania and the adjoining counties of Hungary proper.

V

WHAT, then, is the inner explanation of the Austro-Serbian conflict which has troubled Europe for the past decade? Why have the statesmen of Vienna shown themselves so irreconcilably hostile? How does the problem affect vital British interests? These are questions which it is essential for us to face without delay.

There are two main reasons, and the preliminary clue to them lies in the fact that Belgrade has had to do not merely with Vienna, but with Budapest and Berlin. This war has been made by a combination of Budapest and Berlin over the half inanimate body of Vienna, by an alliance of Germany and Hungary, or, to be accurate, between Prussian militarism and Magyar racial tyranny. It is no accident that the Entente has to fight against the triple league of the German, the Magyar, and the Turk, for to-day their unholy alliance represents the claim of Brute Force to ride roughshod over the smaller nationalities, just as the Entente represents the Principle of Nationality and the rights of every nation, great or small, to its own freedom and individuality.

The underlying reasons of the conflict fall under two headings, the one political and geographical, the other racial.

1. Serbia is the route to the East. In the apt phrase of a writer in the *Times*, the Southern Slavs are "the holders of the Gates." Just as in the

middle ages Serbia lay across the path of the Turkish conqueror moving westwards, so to-day she blocks any advance from the north-west, alike to Salonica and to Constantinople. To those who know Vienna, it has been an open secret for some years past that the Austrian General Staff regards the valley of the Morava, the backbone of the little Serbian kingdom, as the strategic route to the East. The Serbs are the chief obstacle to the German *Drang nach Osten*. And what an obstacle! Their heroic resistance has saved the situation in the Eastern theatre of war. It is true that but for the intervention of Russia Serbia would have been annihilated last summer, and no Serb will ever cease to remember this with gratitude. But it is none the less true also that but for Serbia German armies would have joined the Turks, would have dominated Constantinople, would have raised Syria, Palestine, and perhaps Arabia, would have seriously threatened Egypt, and even spread to the Persian Gulf. But for Serbia our war with Turkey would to-day be waged on the Suez Canal and in Mesopotamia, not at her own front door, the Dardanelles. But for Serbia the Bulgarians would have had no choice but to join the Central Powers; the Germanophil party would have been irresistible. But for Serbia Roumania would have had to abandon her dream of unity and remain permanently neutral, even if she did not throw in her lot with Germany.

It cannot be repeated too often that Serbia is the chief obstacle to those plans of political predominance from Berlin to Bagdad, which lie at the back of

Germany's mind in this world-war; that her services to the common cause entitle her to be treated on an equal footing with all the other allies; and that just as Serbia is the route from the West to Constantinople and Salonica so she is the route, as in Turkish days, from Eastern Europe to Vienna and Berlin. Sooner or later it will become clear even to the man in the street that the way to Berlin lies not through Belgium but through the Balkans and the great Hungarian plains.

2. The second reason is a racial one. Events have given to Serbia the rôle of a Slavonic Piedmont. Just as the germ of United Italy lay in the little Alpine province in the north-west corner of the peninsula, so the true champions of Southern Slav unity have been found in the peasants of the Šumadija, the district of Central Serbia. Serbia and Montenegro are inhabited by one and the same race, pure Serbs of the Orthodox Eastern or "Pravoslav" Church. But they only form a minority of the race as a whole. The two little kingdoms contain about four million Serbs, but there are over seven million of their kinsmen—Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—three kindred branches of the same race, in the Southern provinces of Austria-Hungary, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the Triune Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, in Istria, Carniola, the Banat and Bačka, and in portions of Carinthia and Styria. The Croats and Serbs occupy the borderline between west and east, between Rome and Byzantium, between Catholicism and Orthodoxy

Broadly speaking, every Croat is a Catholic, every Serb an Orthodox. Broadly speaking again, the Croat language is Serb written in Latin characters, the Serb language Croat written in the Cyrilline alphabet.

Despite their common language, the two kindred races have never all been united under a single ruler, just as their Italian neighbours across the Adriatic were for over a thousand years divided into numerous distinct states, despite the ties of race and language. From the ninth to the end of the eleventh century the Duchy, then Kingdom, of Croatia was governed by native princes, upon whose extinction it was conquered by Hungary. For eight centuries Croatia has enjoyed an autonomous position under the Holy Crown of St. Stephen; its scope has varied according to the political constellation, but till 1912 its constant tradition had remained unbroken. Meanwhile the Dalmatian coast towns remained a bone of contention between Venice and Hungary, but the marble lions on their battered walls are still the best proof of the triumph of Italian culture within them. Ragusa alone resisted both Venetians and Turks, and preserved herself inviolate as the home of commerce and the Muses until her tiny republic was destroyed by Napoleon in 1808. The Kingdom of Serbia developed on more distinctively Slavonic lines. During its great days in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, under the Nemanja dynasty, it dominated the Balkan Peninsula, produced a Code of law which is unique

in mediæval records, developed a prosperous commerce and mining industries, and seemed on the point of striking a new note in architecture. Her greatest Tsar, Stephen Dušan, died mysteriously of poison, when his hosts were already thundering at the gates of Constantinople (1356). But the greatness of his empire did not survive him, and only a generation later Serbian independence received its death-blow on the fatal field of Kosovo (1389), the Flodden of the Balkans, but an event far direr in its consequences than Flodden was to Scotland. Bosnia and a fragment of Serbia lingered on under more or less independent rulers till the middle of the fifteenth century. Then the Turkish night replaced the Turkish twilight. From 1463 to 1804 the national life of the Serbs lay utterly crushed. In Serbia their nobility was literally wiped out, in Bosnia it accepted Islam in order to save its lands. The relations of conqueror and conquered are best characterized by the single fact that a Christian who failed to dismount from his horse on meeting a Turk was liable to be killed on the spot.

Throughout this period of utter gloom only two things served to keep alive the Serb tradition—their splendid popular ballads, unequalled in Europe for directness and imagination, save perhaps by the ballads of the Anglo-Scottish Border; and the clergy of the Orthodox Church, poor ignorant despised peasants like their flock, yet bravely keeping the national flame burning. The one bright spot was the tiny mountain eyrie of Montenegro, which

stubbornly maintained its freedom under a long succession of warrior-priests.

During the long Turkish era the Croats and Serbs of Austria naturally pinned all their hopes upon the Habsburg dynasty. The Serbian Patriarch with many thousand Serb families had taken refuge in Slavonia and Southern Hungary, under the guarantee of special privileges awarded by Leopold I; and Karlovci (Karlowitz) thus became the ecclesiastical centre of the Serb nation. Such literary activity as subsisted under such adverse circumstances also centred in the Habsburg dominions, at Novi Sad (Neusatz) on the Danube, and even in Buda, where a Serb bishop still has his seat. The Croats and Serbs of the "Military Frontiers" provided Austria for generations with some of her best fighting material. Serbia was submerged and there were no signs of her coming resurrection.

But the idea of Southern Slav unity is not as modern as might be supposed. In a vague and ill-defined form it can be traced to individual writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The little republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) was a centre of Slavonic culture and aspirations for many centuries; and in the early days of Milton a group of brilliant Ragusan poets, led by Gundulić, the Slav Tasso, took up and fostered the ancient Slav traditions which had always clung along the Dalmatian coast. About the same period another Dalmatian Croat writer, Križanić, uttered the prophetic words, "Non erunt ultra duae gentes, nec dividentur in duo regna;

sed fiet unum ovile et unus pastor." But it was in the Napoleonic era that the movement for unity first assumed serious proportions. The new Illyrian State created by Napoleon united for a brief period considerable portions of the Southern Slav race, and did much to revive national feeling along the Adriatic coast. Just as the Italian poets of the opening century celebrated Napoleon in more than one famous ode, so Vodnik, the young Slovene poet-priest, sang his praises as the creator of Illyria. The movement for unity gathered strength in the forties —when Ljudevit Gaj, a journalist and political propagandist of real genius, devoted his whole energies to linguistic and orthographic reforms, and acclaimed the new Illyria as a mighty harp stretching from the Julian Alps across the whole western and central Balkans, with the disunited Southern Slav provinces now broken and discordant, but soon to be attuned again to a rich harmony. What Gaj did for the Croats, Vuk Karadžić did even more effectually for the Serbs, not merely laying anew the foundations of the language and of the Cyrilline alphabet but revealing to the world the hitherto undreamt-of riches of Serbo-Croat popular poetry. In 1848 the movement for unity found a military leader in Jelačić, the great Ban of Croatia, who rescued the throne of the Habsburgs and was rewarded with the same ingratitude which Francis Joseph has always meted out to all his victorious generals. It found its poet in Peter Petrović-Njegoš, the prince-bishop of Montenegro, whose Miltonic poems, "A Mountain

Garland" and "The Light of the Universe" are a southern Slav classic, and its patron and spiritual inspirer in the great Catholic Bishop Strossmayer, to whom so much that is best and most ideal in modern Croatia is due. It is a happy omen for the future of a race of two religions, that these two great men, high dignitaries of the Eastern and the Western Churches, stand side by side as the champions of Southern Slav unity and concord, of the famous Serb proverb, "*brat je mio, koje vjere bio*" ("he is my brother, no matter what his faith may be)." Nor must we forget the influence of the Italian Risorgimento, of the political thought and national ideals of Mazzini, Foscolo and many another apostle of the new Italy, upon Croat and Serb feeling, and especially upon the Croat leaders in Dalmatia, to whom Italian culture has always been a source of strength and inspiration, though never an excuse for renouncing their own Slavonic nationality.

Finally the movement found its oppressors in the corrupt satraps whom the Jingo governments of Budapest have sent for the past twenty-five years to misgovern Croatia, and under whose reactionary rule the situation has steadily gone from bad to worse. And in 1912-13 it found its liberators in the gallant armies of Serbia, whom the entire Southern Slav provinces of Austria-Hungary to-day acclaim as such in their hearts, though a brutal system has forced them for a year past to fight what is to them a civil war in the worst sense of the word.

To-day we may sum up Serbian aspirations in a

simple phrase, as did the Serbian Gladstone, Mr. Pašić, at the darkest hour of his country's history last November, when overwhelming masses of Austrian troops seemed about to carry all before them. Serbia's aim is not conquest or annexation; it is the liberation and unification of all Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in a single state, the new Jugoslavia. She asks nothing better than that her kinsmen should be free to make their own decision, for she knows that on their part there will be no hesitation.

Before the outbreak of the great war, it was a commonplace of political theory that the Southern Slav Question could be solved in one of two ways—either inside the Habsburg Monarchy, or outside it—either with its help and under its ægis, or against it and despite its resistance. Until war came all reasonable men, and with them the responsible leaders of the Southern Slavs themselves, shrank from advocating a solution such as must inevitably involve an European upheaval, and consoled themselves with the hope that the accession of Francis Ferdinand to the Imperial Throne would involve radical internal changes in the Dual Monarchy, the recognition of many of the Southern Slav claims and a consequent improvement of the relations of Austria-Hungary and Serbia. But with the actual outbreak of this dreaded conflagration, the problem assumed a new form. Even those who most strongly favoured palliatives in times of peace, are to-day bound to favour a really drastic solution of the problem, such as shall prevent all recurrence

of trouble in the near future. To-day the alternatives are the absorption of the two independent Serb states in the neighbouring Monarchy—in other words, the union of the entire Southern Slav race under Habsburg rule—or the liberation of her kinsmen in the Monarchy by Serbia as the Southern Slav Piedmont.

For years past the political leaders in Croatia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia would have welcomed an honourable compromise with Vienna. But the bureaucrats of Vienna (as distinguished from the late Heir-Apparent and the little group of intellectuals who looked to him as their future leader) and above all the politicians of Budapest—Government and Opposition alike—did not desire any such compromise. The statesmen of Austria-Hungary deliberately made the "great refusal," and history, inexorable as ever, is placing the solution of the problem in other hands. To-day the Southern Slavs, after years of misery, repression and deception, are solid for Serbia and the Entente; and that is why those politicians and publicists who have not been interned or imprisoned by the Austrian and Hungarian authorities, or who have contrived to escape across the frontier, have gravitated naturally to London, the haven of all earlier political refugees, and have issued their appeal to the British Parliament and nation. Their manifesto and the fuller Memorandum which they placed in the hands of Lord Crewe[1] and M. Delcassé summarize in a mas-

[1] In the absence of Sir Edward Grey.

terly fashion their ardent desire for National Unity and the international grounds which justify them in putting forward such a claim.[1]

VI

ANY consideration of the two alternatives referred to above may be confined to the second; for the first involves the complete defeat of the Quadruple Entente and the consequent destruction of our power to influence the solution of any decisive European problem. But it is essential that public opinion should obtain a clear idea of what Southern Slav unity means in practice, what are the difficulties in its way, and how such a solution fits into the scheme of the allies. My present intention is to convert the problem into terms of geography in a single sentence, then to consider the political results which such an union would involve, and finally to treat in some detail the obstacles due to the conflicting racial and strategic claims of Serbia's neighbours.

Southern Slav unity, then, means the union of the Triune Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, of Bosnia-Herzegovina, of the Eastern or Slav portion of Istria, of the Slovene territory of southern Austria (in Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria), and of the Western or Serb section of the Banat, with the existing kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, in a single Southern Slav state, the new Jugoslavia. Geo-

[1] This Memorandum has just been published in pamphlet form.

graphically it involves the acquisition of the river frontier of the Drave and the Mur on the north; the protection of Belgrade by a fair partition of the Banat between Serbia and Roumania; the discovery of a reasonable line separating Italian and Southern Slav territory on the west, and representing as nearly as possible a compromise between ethnography and geography (or strategy, as it is now more fashionable to call it), and on the south the union of Montenegro and Serbia.

Such a far-reaching change obviously presupposes a complete victory of the Entente, and the disruption of Austria-Hungary, and after a year of war we are very far from such a consummation. Yet it is becoming increasingly obvious that unless this disruption can be brought about we shall not have beaten Germany. Since the beginning of the world, a sound instinct has prompted every warrior to aim at his enemy's most vulnerable part, and in the present war our surest means of defeating Germany is to crush Turkey and overwhelm Austria-Hungary, thus detaching from Germany those thirty-five million Slavs and Latins who are dragged unwillingly at the heels of the Central Powers in a cause which is not theirs. The failure to solve the Southern Slav question involves, as its corollary, that half-solution of the war as a whole which is above all to be dreaded and opposed. As the Serbian proverb says, it is better never to begin than never to finish.

In what exact form Southern Slav unity would take place, only the future can show. It is a fortu-

nate sign that the Serbian Government, and public opinion in Serbia, is not only disposed but anxious to leave the widest possible latitude in the form, to their kinsmen in Croatia, Dalmatia and Bosnia. The idea of conquest or annexation is unknown; the only possibility is liberation and voluntary union. The essentials are a single dynasty, which can only be the Karagjorgjević; a central Parliament for all common affairs, such as foreign policy, army and defence, commerce, finance, railways, etc.; an unitary army and diplomatic service; a single customs and railway system; and absolute equality of the three religions, Orthodox, Catholic and Mohammedan—and of the two orthographies, Cyrilline and Latin. Beyond that, there will be inevitably very wide latitude indeed, and much local divergence. For instance it is safe to assume and indeed right to expect that the future King of Serbia will be crowned as King of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, with the ancient crown of Zvonomir. But perhaps some convenient formula will be found, substituting a racial for a territorial title, and proclaiming a King of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, on the analogy of the King of Scots, the King of the French and the King of the Hellenes.

Then again the provincial Diets of Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Istria and Carniola may still continue to exist for such local affairs as are obviously unsuited for treatment in the Central Jugoslav Parliament; but this will doubtless be left to the decision of the respective legislatures,

The land system cannot possibly be treated on a single scale; the differences of soil, tradition and development are far too great. In Bosnia, the feudalism of the Moslem Beys still survives almost unimpaired, and land purchase is only in its most elementary stage. In Dalmatia the contrast between the fertility of some of the islands and portions of the coast and the forbidding barrenness of the mountainous interior is reflected in the divergent standards of life among the peasantry. In Croatia-Slavonia a large proportion of the peasantry owns its own land, but there are great differences between east and west, and large landed estates still survive. In Serbia itself the land is divided in ideal fashion among a large number of peasant proprietors, and irregularities of ownership and tenure are almost unknown; while in the newly acquired territory of the south Turkish conditions still prevail, and the Serbs have had no time to introduce agrarian reforms. Finally in the Banat and the Bačka, though there are many rich and flourishing peasant proprietors, there are also huge *latifundia* belonging to the Magyar aristocracy and to the Catholic Church, and large tracts of alluvial soil still undeveloped and neglected. Here not merely land purchase but even colonization will be inevitable. All this presents a field for exhaustive study and careful and even complicated legislation.

In the same way many years must elapse before an uniform code of law can be evolved for the whole of Jugoslavia. At present Serbia has a Code which is based upon French law, In Montenegro the Code

drawn up by the Croat jurist Bogišić still remains to a large extent on paper. Dalmatia and the Slovene districts of course employ the Austrian Code. In Croatia-Slavonia the unreformed and anachronous Code, which was enforced throughout the Habsburg dominions during the fifties under the absolutist *régime* of Alexander Bach, has never been superseded. Any attempt to reform it on the lines of its infinitely more enlightened Austrian successor, has been successfully prevented by the Hungarian Government, while the autonomous authorities in Croatia always possessed sufficient power to block any design for bringing it into line with the Hungarian Code, which of course prevails across the Drave and the Danube in the Serbian districts of Hungary proper. Finally Bosnia-Herzegovina has a special system of its own, evolved under Austro-Hungarian rule and complicated by the presence of 600,000 Mohammedan Serbs. The handicap from which the Southern Slavs suffer as the result of these divergences can easily be imagined. One simple illustration is the fact that there is no reciprocity in legal teaching between the Croat University of Zagreb (Agram) and the Universities of Graz or Vienna, where hundreds of young Croats and Slovenes from Austria are bound to study.

Again, existing administrative methods must survive the union for many years, if only because Serbia, with whom administration has never been a strong point, is quite incapable of providing anything approaching an adequate number of officials. Municipal rights are well developed on modern lines both in

Dalmatia and Croatia, even though they have repeatedly suffered from arbitrary infringement, and Serbia will have far more to learn than to teach in this respect. In matters of education a certain unification will be necessary, within due limits; but a long time will elapse before the Slovenes, among whom illiteracy is already rare, and the Dalmatians, 300 of whose villages are without schools, can be put on the same level with Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia, where there are also the greatest possible educational divergences. Finally in all matters affecting maritime law and other kindred subjects, Serbia will have to leave the initiative to the adventurous and experienced seamen of Dalmatia.

Enough has been said to show that the work of real unification which must follow the actual union, will be a long and difficult process. But this is not a reason for shrinking from it. The problem is exactly the same which faced disunited Italy two generations ago; and indeed it is no exaggeration to assert that Tuscany, Piedmont and Venice were at that date far more remote from the Papal States and the Two Sicilies in institutions, traditions and even dialect, than Bosnia or Dalmatia from Serbia or Slovenia to-day. On the economic side, again, the problem is infinitely simpler than that which faced the states of the German confederation in the first half of the nineteenth century. The obstacles are in no way insurmountable, and the men whose task it will be to deal with them are among the ablest politicians in the Europe of to-day.

VII

It may be argued that my present treatment of the subject is like putting the cart before the horse, and that many political difficulties have to be overcome before the problem of unification can even be seriously considered. But I am inclined to think that a clear statement of the aims will help the reader to a better understanding of those difficulties, and I have therefore postponed their discussion till the end.

One essential preliminary to the realization of Southern Slav unity is the complete victory of the Allies and the disruption of the Dual Monarchy. But as it is becoming increasingly obvious that the surest means of weakening Germany lies through Turkey and Austria-Hungary, it is perhaps no longer so necessary to-day to emphasize the identity of British and Jugoslav interests. Nevertheless, the people of the British Empire in particular should never forget that Serbia and the Jugoslavs hold the pass that leads from Germany to Constantinople, Egypt, and India. The service rendered by Serbia in defending this can hardly be over-estimated. It is a foremost British interest that Serbia and the Jugoslavs should be strengthened, so that they may be able in future, as in the past, to defend the gate against all comers. Nothing can so strengthen them as complete national unity. Southern Slav unity is therefore a cardinal requirement of British policy, apart from our devotion

to the principle of nationality and to the cause of freedom in Europe. In one sense Serbia and Belgium are our victims. Each lay on the path of our enemies' advance. Had they lain to one side, like Holland and Roumania, they might perhaps have been spared. Considering that our statesmen publicly declared on the eve of the war that Serbia did not concern us, it is difficult to claim any credit for her survival. That is shared between Serbia herself and heroic Russia.

A second obstacle is provided by the thorny problem of Macedonia, to which I have already briefly referred. On the one hand it may be assumed that Bulgaria cannot look with equanimity upon the aggrandisement of Serbia, unless she obtains at least some of the concessions which she considers due to her on national grounds. This is reflected in the public utterances of her responsible statesmen, notably the Prime Minister, Mr. Radoslavov, and the late Premier, Mr. Gešov.[1] The former in his famous interview with an American journalist asks the Entente Powers to guarantee Bulgarian national unity (*as interpreted by him*), and seems to pledge in return Bulgaria's immediate support at a critical moment in the great war. On the other hand, public opinion does not yet fully realize the full extent of the sacrifice which Serbia, who alone can satisfy Bulgarian claims, is being asked to make. If she is to surrender to Bulgaria the territory which she so dearly won in the second Balkan War, she too, our

[1] See his newly published *L'Alliance Balkanique*.

ally of a memorable year, must have guarantees as generous and as explicit as that neutral state which is our prospective ally of to-morrow. These guarantees must be twofold, economic and national. Serbia cannot renounce her hold of the Vardar valley except in return for a real and effective outlet to the Adriatic; and for many years to come this can only be provided by the Belgrade-Fiume line. It is not sufficient to argue that in 1925 the Bosnian railways will have been converted from their narrow gauge, or that the necessary links will have been established between Užice and Višegrad, between Aržano and Split (Spalato). All this will take time and cost money; tremendous engineering difficulties will have to be overcome. Serbia requires her outlet to-day, not on an indefinite to-morrow.

But even more vital is the national issue. If the Entente is to guarantee Bulgarian unity, it cannot refuse to guarantee Jugoslav unity, the unity of Serb, Croat and Slovene in a single state. Under no other conceivable circumstances will Serbia yield. She cannot accept a lesser programme without betraying her kinsmen across the frontier, who look to her to-day as their representative before Europe. Nor must the psychology of the Serbian soldier be omitted from our calculations. He has fought twice for Macedonia within the last three years. The graves of his brothers and fathers are scattered thickly over its valleys and hillsides, and the days of mourning are scarcely over. And it was in Macedonia that last November—at the crisis of his

fate, when huge Austrian armies seemed about to overwhelm his beloved Serbia—Bulgarian bands destroyed a railway bridge in the Vardar valley, and for eight precious days held up the ammunition upon which his very life and future as a free man depended. There is not a man in Serbia who does not know this and feel it in a way which our comfortable armchair critics can never even remotely comprehend; and the politicians who should rashly make such concessions, risk not merely an explosion of elemental popular wrath, but even the placing in jeopardy of the national resistance. Only in one way can our statesmen overcome this psychological difficulty in a country so democratic as Serbia, and that is by publicly proclaiming her as our ally on equal terms —a step which has always been carefully avoided hitherto—by adopting her national programme as our own and proving in the most practical of all ways that we stand and fall together. That is an attitude which the generous Serb can appreciate as keenly and readily as the chivalrous French, and which will nerve him to redoubled efforts and fresh enthusiasm.

Into the rival claims of Serb and Bulgarian in Macedonia I decline to enter, merely pointing out that Mr. Radoslavov's estimate of the Bulgarian population in the disputed area (1,500,000) is probably considerably in excess of the total of Bulgar, Serb, Greek, Vlach, Albanian, and Turk in that *macédoine* of races! But my excuse for avoiding this acrid field of controversy is twofold.

(1) The Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance of 1912 was made in Sofia, Belgrade, and Athens; the Serbo-Bulgarian quarrel was made in Budapest, Vienna, and Berlin. A clear perception of this fact is the first step towards a resumption of friendly relations between the two estranged kinsmen.

(2) To-day after years of artificially promoted discord, Serb, Croat, and Slovene feel themselves to be one people with three names, just as the three sister nations of this island feel themselves to be a single nation, without in any way renouncing their own national identity; and I am profoundly convinced that a time will come when in the same way Serb and Bulgar will sink their differences and, proclaiming the essential unity of all the Southern Slav peoples, will admit that their quarrel over the Turkish legacy was a hideous blunder. And here it is important to recognize that the achievement of Serbo-Croat unity should do much to mitigate the unhappy quarrel, and that the Croats and Slovenes may be relied upon to act as mediators between Serbia and Bulgaria. There is already an old and intimate connection between the universities of Zagreb and Sofia.

Above all, Jugoslav unity will divert Serbia's interests more and more towards the West. Macedonia will lose its paramount position in the mind and imagination of her people; the economic necessity which underlies the uncompromising attitude of to-day will be modified, and a compromise will become easier. Macedonia, where the two kindred races flow into each other, and where none can point

to the junction of the currents, should be a bond of union, not a barrier.

VIII

A LESSER but very important difficulty which besets the path of Jugoslav unity, is the problem of finding a satisfactory frontier between Serbia and Roumania, in the event of these two kingdoms expanding into the Banat at the expense of Hungary. The only natural boundary is the river Danube, and hence the Jingoes of Bucarest claim it as the extreme limit of their expansion. But this is a claim to which Serbia could never voluntarily submit. Not merely is the population of the western Banat overwhelmingly Serb—amounting to about a quarter of a million in the County of Torontál and the south of the County of Temes—but is specially dear to Serbian sentiment, owing to the strength of its national consciousness and local organization, and the number of distinguished sons whom it has given to Serbian political and intellectual life. But quite apart from racial grounds, the western Banat, if it is to change hands at all, ought naturally to be assigned to Serbia, because the proper defence of Belgrade, the Serbian capital, requires the possession of the left bank of the Danube. The rival Serbian claim to Temesvár, despite the existence of a Serbian bishopric and numerous Serbian institutions in that town, is equally untenable, in view of the compact mass of Roumanian population which lie to the south and west.

A just settlement will divide the Banat between Serbia and Roumania, apportioning the numerous German colonies of the centre almost equally between them, and leaving to independent Hungary the triangular piece of territory which lies between the Theiss, the Maros, and the Aranka; it is mainly inhabited by Magyars, and commands the important Magyar commercial centre of Szeged. Such a division is essential in the interest of the future relations of two nations which have common interests in every direction, and no conceivable ground of quarrel. One task of Entente diplomacy, if it is to be constructive and not merely negative, must surely be the promotion of cordial Serbo-Roumanian relations.

IX

STILL more true is this of Italy. For the future of European and especially of Mediterranean peace close and cordial relations between Italy and Serbia are essential. But public opinion in the West is still too apt to ignore the essential conditions to such a desirable result, namely that the Croat and Slavene element shall not be ignored, but consulted equally with the kingdom of Serbia. The Southern Slav question can only be solved as an organic whole, not in watertight compartments. It was because Austria-Hungary, so far as she tried at all to solve the question, tried to do so on a Croat basis, ignoring the Serbs, that she has failed so lamentably. Any other Power which

tries to reverse the process and solve it on a purely Serb basis, ignoring the Croats and Slovenes, is equally foredoomed to failure. This assertion is based upon personal experience, for seven years ago when I first began to study the Southern Slav problem and before I had grasped its full significance, I too was tempted to ignore or unduly neglect the rôle of Serbia. But Serbia was an awkward fact which forced itself into my unwilling ken and led me to correct my first erroneous conclusions.

The Adriatic question, then, concerns four parties—Austria-Hungary, Italy, the Serbo-Croat and Slovene population of the coast and its hinterland, and Serbia-Montenegro. Nor is this merely a personal expression of opinion; it is that of the entire Jugoslav nation. To-day Serbia is absolutely unanimous in the view that her Croat and Slovene kinsmen shall be consulted in matters which so vitally concern them, and the British Government will at one and the same time be complying with the dearest desires of the population and following the lines which they themselves laid down early in the war, if they insist upon the wishes of the Adriatic population being consulted in any settlement.

Italian claims on the Adriatic involve a question of some delicacy, but of quite cardinal importance, and though it could serve no good purpose to discuss publicly the secret negotiations of the Entente Governments, it is necessary that the true facts regarding the national claims of Italy and the Southern Slavs should be known as widely as possible. If a settlement

should be attempted on the basis of misleading information, irretrievable harm might be done to the cause of future peace, For Britain the ideal, the only sound policy is close friendship with Italy and with the new Jugoslavia, and friendly mediation between the two. Any Adriatic settlement which does not rest upon real Italo-Jugoslav accord is not worth many years' purchase. It will be overthrown by fresh upheavals; one or other of the two states will by force of circumstances become the tool of Germany; the route to the East will be in German hands; and a vital British interest will be affected. Nor would any secret arrangement which ignored the vital interests of the Southern Slavs have any chance of being permanently enforced. It might galvanize Austria into fresh life, but it would never stem the irresistible national movement which has united Serb, Croat and Slovene in a single aspiration.

I have no desire to trespass on the paths of secret diplomacy. But one fact cannot be emphasized too strongly, and I state it with full knowledge of its truth and on the basis of irrefutable information. At the time of Italy's agreement with the Triple Entente, there were no discussions or negotiations of any kind between Italy and Serbia in respect to the future fate of Dalmatia and Croatia. The Italian press was full of rumours to the effect that a special arrangement had been reached between Rome and Niš, and a statement was even placed in the mouth of "Mr. Janković, a Secretary in the Serbian Foreign Office," expressing his satisfaction at this agreement. This

statement, which also appeared in the leading evening papers of London, as emanating from Rome and on one occasion from Paris, assumes a new significance in view of the fact that there is no Secretary of the name of Jankovié in the Serbian Foreign Office, and that no official answering to this description was in Rome at that particular moment. The explanation is simple. It was either a press intrigue of the Italian Jingoes, intended to sow distrust between Croatia and Serbia, or a similar intrigue on the part of the crypto-Austrophil party in Rome, and it was telegraphed to Paris and London in the hope of misleading Western public opinion as to the relations of Italy and Serbia.

X

WHAT then would a fair and just arrangement between the Italians and the Jugoslavs involve? It must obviously fulfil three main conditions. Firstly, it must complete Italian national unity—a dream with which we all sympathize. Secondly, it must secure to Italy a safe strategic frontier, within reasonable ethnographic limits. Thirdly, it must avert all danger from Italy's unprotected and indefensible eastern coast. The openly avowed aims of the Italian Government are the achievement of unity and the destruction of Austria-Hungary. As has been well said, Italy's honour consists in never having taken from any neighbour territory which was not hers; and it is surely safe to assume that

the Italian people has no idea to-day of breaking with so honourable a tradition.

The total number of Italians in Austria-Hungary was at the last Census (1910) 768,000. Of these 390,000 inhabit the Trentino, which no one outside Austria-Hungary—not even Germany herself—would withhold from union with the Italian kingdom. The question whether Italy should, or will, extend northwards to the Brenner, and so acquire, not merely the Italian and Ladine population of Southern Tirol, but also a considerable number of pure Germans, the descendants of Andreas Hofer and his gallant followers, lies altogether outside the scope of the present inquiry.

The remainder of the Italians in Austria-Hungary are distributed as follows:—(*a*) In the province of Gorizia-Gradisca, 90,119 out of a total of 299,658 (30 per cent. as against 155,039, or 51 per cent., Slovenes); (*b*) in Trieste, 118,959 out of a total of 190,803 (62 per cent. as against 59,974, or 31 per cent., Slovenes); (*c*) in Istria, 145,517 out of a total of 382,652 (37 per cent. as against 224,400, or 58 per cent., Croats and Slovenes); and (*d*) in Dalmatia, 18,028 out of a population of 633,778 (3 per cent. as against 612,669, or 94 per cent., Croats and Serbs).

1. The western portion of the province of Gorizia, on the right bank of the river Isonzo, is purely Italian, and belongs by unquestioned ethnographic right to Italy, as also does Monfalcone and its dockyard. The town of Gorizia itself contains

roughly 14,000 Italians to 11,000 Slovenes, and may thus fairly be claimed alike on ethnical and strategic grounds. Eastwards from the suburbs the entire population is Slovene; there is not even an Italian minority.

2. To the fate of Trieste and Istria Italy could under no circumstances afford to be indifferent. On historic grounds she cannot claim Trieste, which has been a possession of the House of Habsburg since 1386—four hundred years longer than Dalmatia. But if we apply the principle of nationality, it is indisputable that Trieste is an Italian town, though there are nearly 60,000 highly organized and nationally conscious Slovenes within its gates, and though the surrounding country up to the very suburbs is purely Slovene. On the other hand, the commercial interests of Trieste are entirely bound up with its hinterland, by which is meant not only the Alpine provinces, but Upper and Lower Austria and Bohemia on the one hand, and even South Germany (Bavaria) on the other. Any settlement, then, must be a compromise between national and economic interests. As an ancient centre of Italian culture, Trieste would welcome the flag of the Regno upon its municipality, as the surest guarantee that the town would remain Italian in character to all time. But any attempt to include Trieste within the tariff system of the kingdom of Italy would produce fatal results, and the obvious solution is to proclaim the city as a free commercial port. Of course, from a purely Southern Slav point of view, the fate of the

town of Trieste (as distinct from the district) ought to be a matter of complete indifference, though of course the extremists claim it. It is, however, well to bear in mind that the inclusion of Trieste in Italy's tariff system would mean the speedy economic ruin of a great and flourishing commercial centre. Commercially, then, Trieste is unthinkable save either as the port of Austria or as a *porto franco* under Italian suzerainty. If Europe is unwise enough to impose some other solution, the iron laws of economic development will wreck it by their ceaseless pressure, and Trieste may yet prove the starting-point for fresh quarrels between Latin, Teuton, and Slav, and a hindrance to European peace. And here it is well to point out that the party which favours exaggerated strategic claims will also be the party which opposes a liberal policy in Trieste; for as a free commercial port, open to every nation, the town will not require any elaborate land defences, whereas as the commercial preserve of a state upon which it can never geographically or economically depend, it will require a wide hinterland and ceaseless military expenditure on a large scale.

3. So far as Istria is concerned, there would be no insurmountable difficulty in drawing a satisfactory frontier on ethnographical lines. The western portions, including Capodistria, Rovigno and Pola, are overwhelmingly Italian, while the interior of the little province and the eastern shore (including Abbazia, Lovrana, Pazin, etc.) is as overwhelmingly Slavonic

(Croat and Slovene mixed). Any redistribution of territory on the basis of nationality must therefore inevitably assign western Istria to Italy, and all reasonable Southern Slavs fully recognize the necessity. Italy would thus recover her ancient boundaries under Augustus, which ran from the estuary of the Arsa northwards through Istria. Even this line exceeds what Dante regarded as the confines of Italy; for we find him speaking of

> " Pola, presso del Quarnaro,
> che Italia chiude e suoi termini bagna."
>
> (" Pola, near the Quarnero, which brings Italy to an end and washes its confines.")

Nor was Mazzini, the true apostle of Italian nationality, more exacting in his racial claims. In 1858 in his famous treatise on "The Duties of Man" he refers to the future boundaries of Italy and indicates the mouth of the Isonzo as marking "the frontier which God has given you. As far as this frontier your language is spoken and understood; beyond this you have no rights." In 1871 he went further and we may safely go with him. After quoting the famous lines of Dante, he added, "Istria is ours, but from Fiume along the eastern coast of the Adriatic, as far as the Bojana river on the confines of Albania, there extends a zone in which amid the remnants of our colonies the Slavonic element predominates."

4. The town of Fiume, which is an autonomous unit under a governor appointed direct from Budapest by the Hungarian Government, also contains 25,000 Italians. But even in the town itself there are

over 12,000 Croats, and if the large and flourishing suburb of Sisak (which belongs administratively to autonomous Croatia) be added to it, there are at least as many Croats as Italians, and the former include many of the wealthiest and most enterprising Slav business men on the entire coast. Fiume, like Trieste, is the port of a wide hinterland, and no settlement will be just which ignores this fact. Geographically it is the natural port of Croatia and ought to be included in the new Jugoslav state, the more so because only if Serbia secures her direct commercial access from Belgrade to Fiume, can she even contemplate the idea of Bulgaria planting herself athwart the Vardar valley. But Fiume is also the port of Hungary, and in the vital interests of the Magyars and their future as an independent nation, and on the basis of what they have actually done for Fiume's commercial development, they are entitled to be guaranteed free commercial access and special treatment on the Croatian railways. Bohemia too, if she attains her independence, will to a large extent depend upon Fiume for her export trade; and it ought to be possible to devise some triangular economic arrangement between the three states. Fiume, then, should become a free port under the flag of united Jugoslavia, as Trieste under the flag of united Italy.

5. Finally, there remains Dalmatia. It is the custom among a tiny group of controversialists, and especially among "the pseudo-Italian Dalmatians who masquerade as *italianissimi*" to represent almatia as an Italian province. Nothing could be

more inaccurate and misleading. Dalmatia is Slav and has been so for over a thousand years. When Italy was divided between Byzantine and Lombard rule, the first Slav invaders ousted the Avars from the Eastern Adriatic coast, and from that day to this Dalmatia has always maintained its Slav character. The ancient Slavonic liturgy, known as the Glagolitic rite, has been sung uninterruptedly for ten centuries in many of the islands and parts of the mainland of Northern Dalmatia, and Slavonic philologists still make pilgrimage to Krk (Veglia), Cherso and Istria, for traces of early Slav in its purest linguistic form. In the tenth century Split (Spalato), the former home of Diocletian, became the capital of the Croatian kingdom, and its ablest ruler, Zvonomir, received within its walls the royal crown at the hands of the Papal Legate. The ruins of another royal residence may still be traced on a hill between Trogir (Traù) and Šibenik (Sebenico); and the little national museum of Knin contains interesting fragments of architectural design, which show that even at the court of this obscure dynasty a distinctive art was already developing. Dalmatia was long hotly contested between Venice and Hungary, and early in the fifteenth century the Republic finally established its way along the coast. But its influence was in the main confined to establishing *points d'appui*, or strategic outposts for the fleet and for the safety of its trade, now against the Turks, now against the notorious pirates who infested the innumerable islets and creeks of that intricate coast.

The Dalmatian forests were exploited for the building of galleys, and a short-sighted failure to replant is partly responsible for the barren waste of stone, which produces so singular an impression upon the modern traveller. The peasantry was neglected or exploited, while the towns, which had always preserved the character of Roman municipalities, fell more and more under Italian influence; and though Venetian rule during the two concluding centuries of the Republic was oligarchical and police-ridden, it had its compensations and was regarded with apathy, but without aversion. To-day its chief towns, Zadar (Zara), Šibenik (Sebenico), Trogir (Traù), Split (Spalato), Korčula (Curzola), Kotor (Cattaro), are studded with exquisite gems of architecture due to Venetian artistic traditions; but it is well to remember that these are mainly the work of native artists. More than one important member of the Venetian School—as, for instance, Carpaccio, Schiavone (Medulié) and Giovanni Dalmata—was a Dalmatian Slav by birth. The part played by Dalmatia in Venetian commerce is still traceable in the Riva degli Schiavoni.

But the most notable centre of Slavonic culture along the whole coast was the little Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), which always maintained an independent existence and held Turk and Venetian alike at arm's length, until it succumbed to the onslaught of Napoleon eleven years after the fall of the more famous republic. In the early seventeenth century Dubrovnik was the centre of a brilliant galaxy

of poets; and Ivan Gundulić, the Slav Tasso, celebrated in his epic poem "Osman" the past glories of the Southern Slavs, praising the Nemanja dynasty and the Dukes of Bosnia with the same enthusiasm as his own republic's patron, St. Blaise, and lamenting the fall of the Croatian kingdom as he might have lamented the destruction of Dubrovnik itself.

Dalmatia has always led the van of the Jugoslav movement. One of the earliest Croat poets, Marulić, was a native of Split (Spalato). Father Andrew Kačić, the reviver of popular poetry and the forerunner of Vuk Karadžić, the Serbian Grimm, came from Makarska, between Split and the mouth of the Narenta.

The original line of political division between "Italian" and "Slav" in Dalmatia was quite as much social as racial. The so-called Autonomist party, which was the germ of the modern Italian party in the Diet, was due, on the one hand, to a movement of protest on the part of the old-established burghers and patricians of the towns against the peasantry's demand for a share in political life, and, on the other hand, to a movement of parochialism, of fear lest the demand for union with Croatia might end their petty oligarchic privileges. Thirty years ago it was the fashion among such politicians to describe the Serbo-Croat language as "Dalmatian," just as some years later Baron Kállay insisted on dubbing the same language as "Bosnian," for his own purposes in Bosnia. To this day half the electors of the "Italian" party in Zadar (Zara) are Croat peasants

who cannot speak Italian, though they vote as and call themselves Italian!

After the brief interlude of the Napoleonic Illyria, Dalmatia, and with it Dubrovnik, became a portion of the Austrian dominions, and for a whole century was allowed to vegetate in distant neglect and stagnation. From 1815 to 1866—so long as Austria retained her Italian possessions—the tiny Italian minority in Dalmatia was encouraged and fostered by the Austrian authorities, and used as a convenient recruiting ground for loyalist officials. But after 1866 the demand for the manufacture of Austrophil Italian-speaking officials, suitable for the administration of Lombardy or Venetia, naturally ceased at once and for ever. There was no longer any object in artificially fostering the Italian element in Dalmatia. From 1867 till 1903, therefore, the Serbo-Croat majority was encouraged by the Government, with the result that, one by one, the little Italian, or Italianized, oligarchies which controlled the chief towns along the coast, were dispossessed by the pressure of democratic numbers. Ere long Zadar (Zara) was the only commune in the whole province which retained its Italian majority in the municipality. But by 1903 the current of national feeling among Croats and Serbs was already deepening. The old provincialism—the *campanilismo* as the Italians expressively call it—began to yield to a sense of unity and kinship. Then the authorities took fright, and, equally suspicious of Croat and of Italian, they set themselves deliberately to play off the two

races against each other. Croat and Italian have simply played the Government's game by their petty squabbles, and German influence along the coast has been the *tertius gaudens*. And in the present war that will be so once more, unless Italians and Jugo-slavs can be brought into line.

It is a strange comment upon the charge that Austria favours the Slavs of Dalmatia at the expense of the Italians, that while all the leading Croat municipalities (Split, Šibenik, Korčula, Dubrovnik, Kotor and so on) were dissolved early in the war, the solitary Italian municipality of Zadar is still unsuspended, three months after Italy's entry into the war!

XI

ITALY has no ethnographic claim whatever to Dalmatia. The extremists in Rome claim 10 per cent. of the Dalmatian population. In reality it does not exceed 3 to 4 per cent., and even if their contention were just, it would be no argument. It is convenient to argue that Austrian statistics are falsified in favour of the Slavs, though there are no serious grounds for such a statement; and if the argument were limited to the single Census of 1910, it might be difficult to disprove it. But it can be refuted by the facts adduced by Italian writers. Even at the beginning of the eighteenth century it is possible to trace in Venetian documents a conflict between an overwhelming, but subjected, Slav majority and a nume-

rically insignificant Italian minority. In 1833, at a moment when the municipalities were all in the hands of the Italians, and when the Austrian Government favoured them, the population was reckoned at 360,000 Serbo-Croats, 16,000 Italians, 882 Albanians, and 510 Jews.[1] In 1868 Niccolo Tommaseo, the great Italian writer whom the *italianissimi* rashly quote as a living proof of Dalmatia *italianità*, accepts as accurate the estimate of 20,000 Italians as against 400,000 Slavs.[2] In 1873 Maschek gives a similar estimate—27,305 Italians as against 440,282 Serbo-Croats.[3] Thus there is no apparent ground for contesting the accuracy of subsequent statistics.

Italy's own great national leaders have never been in doubt as to the true facts about Dalmatia. Mazzini, in a famous phrase already quoted, limited Italian claims on the east to the Isonzo river. But though he receded, or rather advanced, from this position, he never altered his attitude towards Dalmatia. In 1866 he declared, "on ethnographic, political, commercial grounds, Istria is ours; as necessary to Italy as are the ports of Dalmatia to the Southern Slavs." At an earlier date, indeed (1852), he wrote of "the future Illyria, as the Southern Slavs understand it, of that country whom they invoke under the name of Great Illyria or of the Illyrian Serb

[1] Gardner Wilkinson, *Dalmatia*, I, p. 88.

[2] Prezzolini, *La Dalmazia*, p. 43.

[3] Maschek, *Manuale del regno di Dalmazia per l'anno* 1873, *cit. ibid.*

State, and which comprises in a more or less definite common aspiration Croatia, Carinthia, Serbia, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Bulgaria. The words which he added regarding the common traditions and ideas of the Southern Slav still awaken an echo in the heart of every Serb or Croat patriot.

Tommaseo is even clearer, and his words carry even greater weight, for he was a native of Šibenik (Sebenico) and the inspired advocate of that Italo-Jugoslav entente which all true democrats so ardently desire. In 1861 he wrote, "I do not believe that Dalmatia could ever form an appendage to Italy . . . Future destiny intends her to be the friend of Italy, but not her subject." Elsewhere he writes (1855): "Dalmatia, while loving Italian rule and Italian culture, was not forgetful of its duties to itself: it retained its own spirit (*indole*), its own customs, costume, language; it preserved its Slav character better than Italy its Italian."[1] And in his famous ode "To Dalmatia," written at Paris as early as the year 1835[2]), he exclaims:

"No more 'twixt sea and mountain, sorry scrap
Of earth, with a few barren scattered isles
Shalt thou be, O my country, but reborn
As Serbia—warrior hand and gentle soul."

(Ne piu tra'l monte e il mar, povero lembo
di terra e poche ignude isole sparte,
O Patria mia, sarai; ma la rinata
Serbia—guerriera mano e mite spirto).

[1] Tommaseo, *Secondo Esilio*, II, p. 135
[2] *Cit.* Illyricus, *Dalmazia e Italia*, p. 16.

But perhaps the most significant admission of all comes from the mouth of Mr. Ziliotto, one of the leaders of the Italian minority in Dalmatia, who in 1896 made the following public declaration in the Diet of Zadar (Zara): "We, cut off from Italy by the entire Adriatic, we few thousands scattered within territorial continuity among a population, not of hundreds of thousands, but of millions of Slavs, how could we think of an union with Italy?" Where could be found a clearer recognition of the incontestable fact that Dalmatia can only exist in conjunction with its Slav hinterland, a fact which provides the true explanation of Austria-Hungary's Bosnian adventure. It was because she already possessed Dalmatia that intervention in Bosnia became inevitable.

To-day the tiny Italian minority in Dalmatia cannot possibly be adduced as an excuse for an Italian occupation. The argument that that minority possesses a cultural importance out of all proportion to its numbers, can be met by the unquestioned fact that Dalmatia possesses to-day, as in the past, a genuine Slavonic culture of her own; that the two leading Croat poets of to-day, Antony Tresić-Pavičić and Count Ivo Vojnović come respectively from Hvar (Lesina) and Dubrovnik (Ragusa); that the pioneers of the Croat artistic revival, Bukovac and Medović, as well as other artists of real merit, are Dalmatian Croats; that Ivan Meštrović, the Rodin of the Slavonic world, who took Rome by storm in 1911, and has this summer roused the enthusiasm of

London, is the son of a poor Dalmatian Croat peasant in the hinterland of Šibenik, rooted by tradition and perfervid patriotism to his native province and giving eloquent expression in stone to that dream of Serbo-Croat unity which inspires the vast mass of his countrymen; and that Dalmatia has in the last ten years formed the backbone of the political movement and produced many of the ablest and most energetic leaders of the race.

But there is an even more effective answer to those who put forward Italian culture as an excuse for annexing Dalmatia to Italy. It is that no sane Jugoslav dreams of ousting Italian culture as a spiritual force. His leaders themselves are to a man saturated with Italian literary traditions and political ideals; to them Mazzini, Foscolo, Carducci, are a reality and an example. What they resent, and will resist to the death, is any attempt to employ that culture as the tool of Italianization, or as an excuse for imposing another alien yoke upon the Slav population. But otherwise they can be relied upon to offer adequate guarantees for the survival and proper treatment of the Italian minorities, and for complete linguistic liberty in their schools and local cultural institutions. Indeed, it is an open secret that if the dream of Jugoslav unity should be realized, the Italian language will be made an obligatory subject in all the Slav schools along the coast. Very different would be the attitude of the *italianissimi*, if their programme could be realized. In a long conversation last winter on the subject of Dalmatia, one of the most prominent agitators in the

anti-Slav campaign, himself an Austrian subject, tried to win me to his point of view by assuring me of his eagerness to apply "liberal principles" to the settlement of the Dalmatian problem. "But," he added, in a sudden burst of candour, "I would shut up all the priests and schoolmasters." There spoke the true spirit of that Austrian police state, of whom he is a characteristic product.

XII

THERE is one other ground on which Italy can advance claims to portions of the Dalmatian coast, namely, strategic necessity, and here the Southern Slavs must meet Italy half way. Granted good-will, honesty of purpose, and a little common sense on both sides, and a compromise is easy of attainment. Italy's three aims are the destruction of Austria-Hungary, the realization of national unity, and the acquisition of a strategic frontier; and of these the last two are dependent upon the first. If, then, the first aim be realized, the Austro-Hungarian fleet disappears from the scene, and Italy not merely dominates the Adriatic, but reigns alone and unchallenged throughout that sea. What greater strategic gain than this can possibly be imagined? In the words of one of Italy's most thoughtful and unprejudiced political writers, Professor Salvemini:[1] "We cannot prevent

[1] *Guerra o Neutralità*, p. 17.

Austria from having a fleet, because she already possesses one. But the Serbia of to-morrow we must prevent from having one, both in her own interest and in ours. And we can take advantage of this moment, which will not recur in all history, in order to exclude from the Adriatic Austria, which has a fleet, and to substitute for her a new state which has no fleet, and which we can prevent from creating one." Nor is this a mere phrase. The new Jugoslavia will not merely have no navy, but no spare capital to invest in one, and, quite apart from the probability of her partial dependence upon Italian commercial enterprise and capital, absolutely no inducement to build one, except as a defence against Italy. Thus Italy will have the remedy in her own hands, and this remedy can only be the furtherance of Southern Slav aspirations, and close and cordial friendship with the new state.

The Italians, however, are proverbially cautious in their political reckonings, and it is open to argument that even this does not offer a sufficient guarantee, and that Italy must lay hands upon the main strategic keys to the Adriatic sea. Even this does not present insurmountable difficulties. These keys are five in number. It is universally admitted that two of the five, Trieste and Pola, will be hers in the event of a *complete* victory of the Allies, though not in the event of Austria-Hungary surviving. The third, the little island of Lussinpiccolo, covers the back of Pola and commands the entrance to the Quarnero and to the port of Fiume. The fourth, the island of Vis

(Lissa), with its convenient harbour, is an ideal *point d'appui* from which the whole of central Dalmatia can be controlled. The fifth, Valona, is already in Italian hands, and it is already certain that none of the Powers will challenge her permanent occupation of what may easily be made one of the best harbours in the Mediterranean. All this can be done without any very serious violation of the principle of nationality. The total population of Lussinpiccolo and Lissa does not exceed 10,000, and though Trieste contains 59,000 Slovenes, a guarantee of full linguistic liberty in schools and institutions would doubtless be accorded to them by Italy.

If even these concessions were still regarded as inadequate, one final guarantee might be insisted on, namely the dismantling of the fortresses of Šibenik (Sebenico) and Kotor (Cattaro) and the neutralization of the Dalmatian coast. But those who demand more than this do not share the ideals proclaimed by the Allies at the outbreak of war, and have deliberately rejected the principle of nationality as a basis of the European settlement. Those few Italians who demand the whole of Istria, the northern islands of Dalmatia and Zadar (Zara) and Šibenik (Sebenico) with their hinterland, have nothing in common with the Italy of Pellico and Bandiera, of Garibaldi and Mazzini, of Cavour and Manin, of Mamoli and Carducci. Far rather are they pupils of Machiavelli and his royal pupil Frederick of Prussia. The realization of such a programme would involve the annexation of not less than seven hundred thousand

Croats and Slovenes to Italy, and as it is just these very Slavs among whom the movement for Southern Slav unity is strongest and who are best organized to maintain their national existence, it is obvious that Italy would be undertaking a thorny and highly dangerous task. Any attempt to lay hands upon Dalmatia would be resisted to the death; and even if successful, could only sow the seeds of another war. Austria-Hungary, by representing the Entente Powers as the inspirers of an anti-Slav conspiracy, might secure one last chance of rallying her disaffected Southern Slav population. Those who advocate so unnatural and monstrous an arrangement as the betrayal of nearly a million Slavs to Italy and their severance from their natural hinterland and thus from all hope of economic progress in the future, are consciously or unconsciously playing the game of the Central Powers, patching up the sinking ship of Austria and thus rendering infinitely more difficult the task of the Allies in penetrating through Austria into Germany.

It must, moreover, be remembered that, even if the statesmen of the Entente were to be so rash and ill-advised as to sanction such a programme, it would most certainly be repudiated by the free democracies of the West and their Parliamentary representatives, as also by that powerful body of enlightened Slav opinion which cannot be ignored even in autocratic Russia. Even the man in the street, despite his ignorance of details, might come to realize that the fate of Dalmatia is a test case, and push the argument to its logical conclusion. At the root of the

German conquest of Belgium lies the desire to conquer or control the mouths of Germany's great river the Rhine and its sister-rivers the Maas and the Scheldt. To that claim, which threatens the very existence of Britain, our statesmen have replied by proclaiming the right of Small Nations to their national independence and integrity, in spite of all claims of strategy or *force majeure*. By acknowledging Italy's right to occupy the Dalmatian coast upon strategic grounds and in open defiance of the wishes of its inhabitants, we should knock the bottom out of our case and should deprive ourselves of the moral right to resent the German conquest of Belgium. Germany has as good a right to Belgium and Holland as Italy to Dalmatia; in the latter as in the former it would rest upon the sword, and upon the sword alone. But until events prove me wrong, I for one refuse to believe that Italy will deny her whole past and oppose in her Southern Slav neighbours those national aspirations to which she owes her own resurrection. It is only Belgium who can produce poets in these iron days; but it is difficult to conceive of Cammaerts or Verhaeren, the champion of "La Belgique Sanglante," celebrating an attempt of the Italy whom we all love to impose her rule upon hundreds of thousands of Adriatic Slavs, and violating the very principle which kindled the generous sympathies of her people for Belgium.

Even more perfidious than the intrigues in favour of an Italian Dalmatia is the secret design of a tiny gang of plotters to prevent the eventual union of

Croatia and Serbia and to commit the Entente Governments to vetoing beforehand what lies in the very nature of things, if success should crown the arms of the Allies. If such intrigues were aimed at saving Austria from destruction—and it may be that this is the secret hope of some of its advocates—then they are at least comprehensible. But as their object is to prevent Southern Slav unity in the selfish interests of a third party, we are entitled to assume that our statesmen will find a ready answer to the question "Cui prodest" and treat their authors with the contempt which they deserve. The monstrous nature of these intrigues is best shown by the fact that the very individuals who not long ago laid such stress upon Croatia's inviolability and right to a separate existence, have been the first to urge that Serbia should be bought off by the promise of Slavonia, as a limb hacked off from the living body of the Triune Kingdom.

Southern Slav unity must and will come. It has made wondrous progress in the last few years, and to-day every Southern Slav, be he Serb, Croat or Slovene, be he Orthodox, Catholic or Mohammedan, re-echoes the words which Manin, the great Venetian patriot, applied to Austrian rule in Northern Italy two generations ago: "We do not ask that they should govern us better; we ask that they should go!" "Despised peoples," said Tommaseo, with that prophetic sense which has so nonplussed the fanatics, who to-day misuse his name and misrepresent his ideas, "despised peoples hold the keys

of the future"; and the Southern Slavs, who till so lately were despised and calumniated, but who have won by their gallantry and their sufferings the admiration of the world, most certainly have a great future before them. Let it be the task of Britain to help them to their true place in Europe, and to lay the foundations of an abiding friendship between the two nations.

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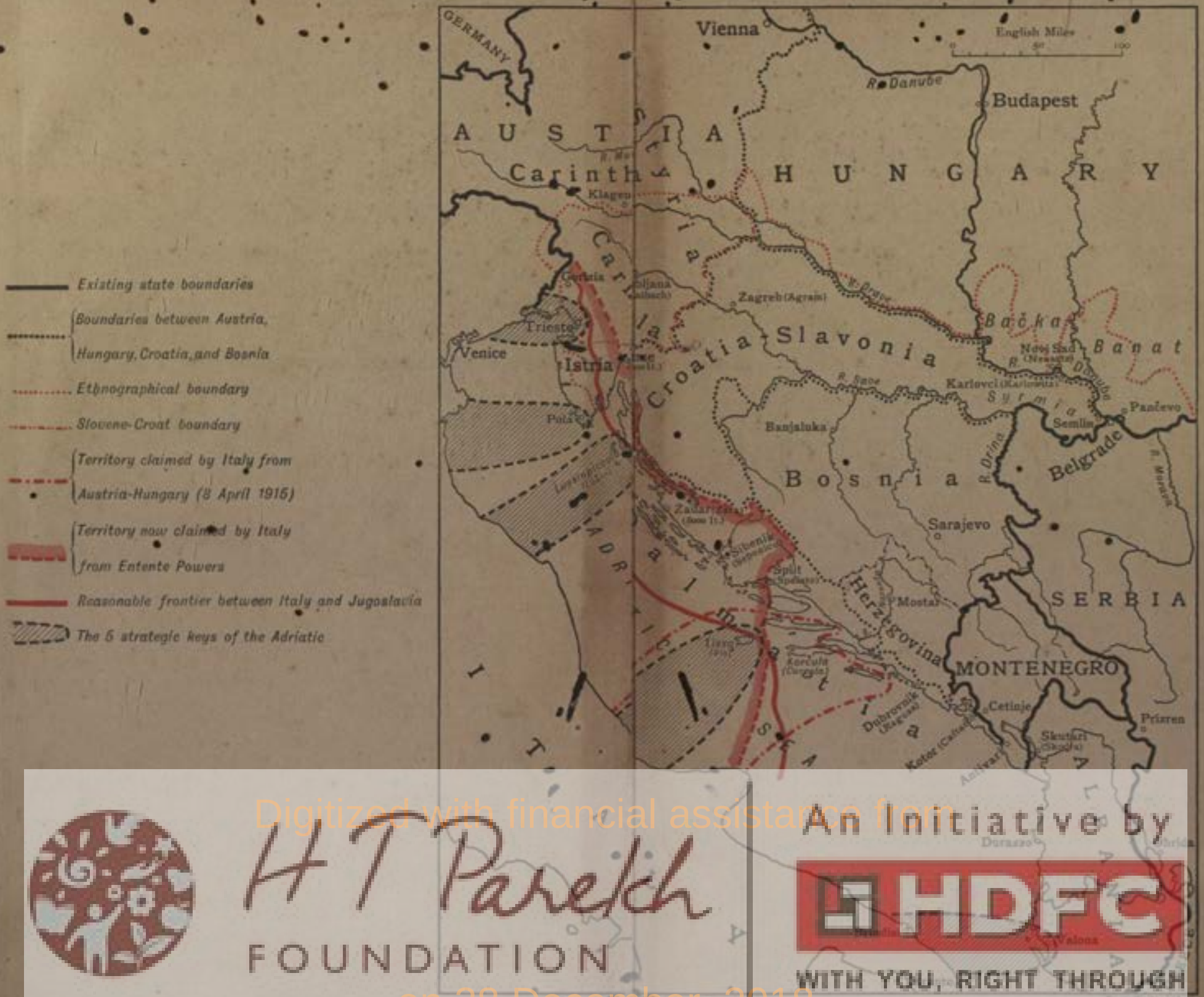

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